

## A BYZANTINE GOLD MEDALLION AT DUMBARTON OAKS

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THE Dumbarton Oaks Collection has recently acquired a Byzantine gold medallion, mounted as an encoplium (figs. 1-3),<sup>1</sup> which for some time was in the collection of the distinguished Viennese scholar Josef Strzygowski, and which, while in his collection, was frequently illustrated, discussed, or referred to in books and articles by Strzygowski as well as other scholars.<sup>2</sup> The medallion deserved such attention, for it is the finest surviving example from the sixth century, and is the only true medallion of any importance with a religious subject that has come down to us from that period. When Strzygowski first published it in an article in *Oriens Christianus* in 1915, he called it Syrian, and since then it has been called either Syrian or Palestinian. Now, however, in view of the progress made in research on sixth- and seventh-century Byzantine metalwork in general, it merits fresh study.

### I

Strzygowski acquired the medallion on June 22, 1906, at Graz, from a Cypriot Greek,<sup>2a</sup> who stated in a letter that it

<sup>1</sup> Accession no. 55.10. In the preparation of this paper the writer has benefited from many discussions with members of the staff at Dumbarton Oaks.

<sup>2</sup> J. Strzygowski, "Ravenna als Vorort aramäischer Kunst," *Oriens Christianus*, N.S.V. (1915), pp. 96 ff.; *Idem*, *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung* (Leipzig, 1917), pp. 44 ff.; E. Baldwin Smith, *Early Christian Iconography* (Princeton, 1918), pp. 80, 166; W. F. Volbach, *Metallarbeiten des christlichen Kultes in der Spätantike und im frühen Mittelalter* (Mainz, 1921), p. 17 (with bibliography); J. Strzygowski, *Die altslavische Kunst* (Augsburg, 1929), p. 207; *Idem*, *L'ancien art chrétien de Syrie* (Paris, 1936), p. 28, pl.vi.

<sup>2a</sup> Together with the medallion, Strzygowski acquired two pieces of gold chain, part of a gold necklace formerly set with pearls (cf. *infra*, p. 249), and two links from another chain. All three objects are now at Dumbarton

had been found in Cyprus with other Byzantine jewelry which was sold to the elder J. Pierpont Morgan, and which was later given, by his son, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The letter is sufficiently important to the present discussion to be quoted in full:<sup>3</sup>  
"Le dit médaillon, trouvé à l'endroit où était anciennement la ville Lamboussa à l'île de Chypre (province Cyrinia) représente d'un côté la naissance et de l'autre le baptême de Jésus Christ. En même temps dans le même endroit et dans le même pot de terre cacheté ils ont trouvé les sous-dits objets. 1. Un collier composé de 9 saphires et 9 perles.<sup>4</sup> 2. Une paire de boucles d'oreille ornées tout autour de perles et au milieu de pierres précieuses de couleur violette.<sup>5</sup> 3. Une ceinture en or composée de 18 petits médaillons, attachés l'un à l'autre à l'aide de petits crochets, avec figures diverses.<sup>6</sup> 4. Deux croix en or: de la chaîne de l'une pendait une dizaine d'amphores en or,<sup>7</sup> et de l'autre divers ornements en espèce de monnaies et coeurs.<sup>8</sup> 5. Une paire de bracelets en or avec figures de vigne et raisin.<sup>9</sup> Les objets susmentionnés ont été vendus à Chypre à un Français il y a

Oaks. Figure 1 is a composite photograph showing both sides of the medallion, the other pieces acquired by Strzygowski, and the gold hinge now in the Museum of Nicosia (for which see *infra*).

<sup>3</sup> Strzygowski, *Altai-Iran*, p. 44, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> A. Samson, "Trésor d'orfèvrerie et d'argenterie trouvé à Chypre et faisant partie de la collection de M. J. Pierpont Morgan," *Le Musée*, III (1906), pl. xxi (second figure from top of plate).

<sup>5</sup> *Idem.*, pl. xxi (upper right and left figures).

<sup>6</sup> *Idem.*, pl. xxi (second and third figures from bottom of plate), cf. my figures 4 and 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem.*, pl. xxi (bottom figure).

<sup>8</sup> *Idem.*, pl. xxi (top, center).

<sup>9</sup> *Idem.*, pl. xx.

d'ici deux ans, qui les a revendus à un Américain pour la somme de quatre mille cinq cent Livres anglaises."

The jewelry described by the Cypriote Greek was only part of a much larger find,<sup>10</sup> which has come to be called the Lamboussa treasure,<sup>11</sup> and which, like many clandestine finds, was divided up among its discoverers. Part of it reached Paris where it was sold to the late J. P. Morgan; part of it went to the British Museum in London, and part of it was impounded by the local government and is now in the Museum in Nicosia. This latter portion contains a gold hinge (fig. 1) that fits the two rings at the top of the frame on the Strzygowski medallion, and thus provides a check on the Greek's statement to Strzygowski.

A glance at some other parts of the treasure is relevant to the study of our medallion. The whole treasure was never fully published, and pieces like the Strzygowski medallion reached the market separately. Dalton published, as coming from Cyprus, a silver plate with a monogram in niello,<sup>12</sup> now in the collection of Mrs. Paul Fagan in San Francisco. This plate has stains from burial, as have the silver plates in the Lamboussa treasure, a fact which convinces me that it was found with the others, as Dalton hinted. Two other plates, one in the Metropolitan Museum and one in the Walters Art Gallery — unknown to Dalton, but bearing the same monogram in

<sup>10</sup> O. M. Dalton, "A Byzantine Silver Treasure from the District of Kerynia, Cyprus, now Preserved in the British Museum," *Archaeologia*, LVII (1900), pp. 159-174; *idem*, "A Second Silver Treasure from Cyprus," *ibid.*, LX (1906), pp. 1-24; *idem*, "Byzantine Silversmith's Work from Cyprus," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XV (1906), pp. 615-617; *idem*, "Byzantine Plate and Jewellery from Cyprus in Mr. Morgan's Collection," *Burlington Magazine*, X (1906), pp. 355-362; also, A. Samson, *op.cit.*, pp. 121-129.

<sup>11</sup> Sir George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, I (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 267, 268.

<sup>12</sup> B.Z., *op. cit.*, p. 615.

<sup>13</sup> O. M. Dalton, *East Christian Art* (Oxford, 1925), p. 328. Compare with references given in footnote 10.

niello as that of Mrs. Fagan, which indicates that all three were part of a set — are similarly stained from burial. This is further evidence that the treasure did not leave Cyprus all at once, but was smuggled out at different times; so the case of the Strzygowski medallion is not an isolated one.

Among the objects in the treasure are a number of silver dishes, a silver censer, and a belt set with gold coins and medallions which are important to any discussion of the Strzygowski medallion. When Dalton first began publishing the silver plates found with the Lamboussa treasure he attributed them to Cyprus. Later he seemed somewhat less certain as to their place of origin.<sup>13</sup> Bréhier<sup>14</sup> and Diehl<sup>15</sup> thought that the Lamboussa silver, and in particular the David plates in the Metropolitan and Nicosia Museums, came from Antioch. In his great work on Byzantine silver in the Hermitage, Leonid Matzulevich presented the theory that the five control-marks on the underside of Byzantine silver objects indicated a Constantinopolitan origin, and he showed, for the first time, that the portraits found on the stamps were those of the reigning emperor.<sup>16</sup> Some Byzantinists have been slow to accept his conclusions,<sup>17</sup> but others are now beginning to take them into account.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> L. Bréhier, *The Treasures of Syrian Silverware and the Art School of Antioch* (reprinted from the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1920), (Paris, 1921), *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Diehl, "L'école artistique d'Antioche et les trésors d'argenterie syrienne," *Syria*, II (1921), p. 86; *idem*, "Argenteries syriennes," *ibid.*, XI (1930), p. 209.

<sup>16</sup> L. Matzulevich, *Byzantinische Antike* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1929). Smirnov had earlier pointed out the significance of these control-marks, as noted in O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911), p. 568, n. 3. Marc Rosenberg, in his *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, IV (Berlin, 1928), pp. 615-740, also continued the researches of Smirnov.

<sup>17</sup> This was pointed out by Gèza de Francovich, "L'arte siriaca e il suo influsso sulla pittura medievale nell'Oriente e nell'Occidente," *Commentari*, II (1951), p. 18, n. 2.

<sup>18</sup> See Kurt Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, 1951), p. 3.

All of the silver plates with the story of David, in the Metropolitan and Nicosia Museums, are marked with the portrait of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, in his portrait in the stamps, Heraclius wears a short beard. Now it is known that the Emperor Heraclius shaved his beard at the time of his coronation (610),<sup>20</sup> and his coins from that date to 628/29<sup>21</sup> show him with a short beard, while on his later coins it is long. Since the control-marks on the David plates show Heraclius with a short beard, the plates were made between A.D. 610 and 628/629. They could not have been made in Antioch, as has been claimed, because it was precisely during those years that Antioch was in the hands of the Arabs. A Count of the Orient, the Byzantine administrative officer at Antioch from the time of Constantine the Great, is not mentioned after A.D. 608.<sup>22</sup> Mr. Philip Grierson has proved also that the coins of Heraclius which can be dated between the years A.D. 610 and 628/29, and which were formerly considered Antiochian, were actually made at Isaurian Seleucia, and that Antioch had no mint during that period.<sup>23</sup> In such chaotic times luxury goods with stamps of imperial officials would not have been made in Antioch, or anywhere in Syria for that matter. Matzulevich's theory that stamped silver was made in Constantinople is greatly strengthened by these observations, and we can safely assume that the David plates were made in the imperial city.

This is important because most of the silver objects in the Lamboussa treasure have the five control-marks. For example, on the plate with a nielloed

<sup>19</sup> Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 636–653.

<sup>20</sup> W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, I (London, 1908), p. xxiv.

<sup>21</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>22</sup> Glanville Downey, *A Study of the Comites Orientis and the Consulares Syriae* (Princeton, 1939), p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> "The Isaurian Coins of Heraclius," *Nu-mismatic Chronicle*, XI (1951), pp. 57–62.

cross in the British Museum, there is an imperial portrait which has been identified with Mauricius Tiberius.<sup>24</sup> The nielloed plate in Cyprus shows the portrait of a seventh-century emperor,<sup>25</sup> while the three plates with the nielloed monogram in the Walters Art Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in Mrs. Fagan's collection have both Heraclius' monogram and his beardless portrait (A.D. 610).<sup>26</sup> All of this indicates that the owner or owners of the Lamboussa treasure were closely associated with Constantinople, a statement further supported by the evidence of the belt found in the same jar with the Strzygowski medallion. This belt is made up of gold coins of Theodosius II (408–450), Justin I (519–527), Justinian (537–566), and Maurice Tiberius (582–602); and four gold consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius (figs. 4, 5). A fragment of a clasp (fig. 11), now in Nicosia, is set with a coin of Justin II and Tiberius (578). It had been a fashion since Roman times, to set jewelry with old coins,<sup>27</sup> and in the present instance they indicate that the owner had close connections with Constantinople. This is particularly true of the imperial consular medallions which the emperor customarily presented to important officials, and which were not accessible to private citizens.

A final item in the Lamboussa treasure which points to Constantinople is a part of a necklace, with links formed of four rings of gold formerly holding pearls (fig. 1). There is a very similar necklace,

<sup>24</sup> Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 676; Matzulevich, "Argenterie byzantine en Russie," in *L'art byzantin chez les Slaves, deuxième recueil dédié à la mémoire de Théodore Uspenski*, II (Paris, 1932), p. 299.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 672; Matzulevich, "Argenterie byzantine. . .," p. 299.

<sup>26</sup> These control marks are unpublished. For a general discussion of "Imperial" stamps, see the note by Miss Erica Cruikshank in the preceeding pages of this volume.

<sup>27</sup> See S. P. Scott, *The Civil Law*, III (Cincinnati, 1932), p. 240, no. 28.

attached to a small gold medallion (not a true one, since it has a figure on one side only) with the portrait head of a sixth-century emperor, possibly Tiberius II (fig. 6).<sup>28</sup> This portrait of high quality, doubtless made at Constantinople, may have been an imperial gift. Small gold medallions with imperial portraits are known to have existed in the sixth century, and we are told by John Malalas that one was worn by a Persian in the time of Justin I: "He [Tzath, Czar of the Lazi of Persia] was appointed and crowned by the Czar, and wore the czarist crown and an all-silk white *okril*, under which, instead of a purple garment, was put a gold broad vestment with a little medallion ornamented with the portrait of himself; — and he wore a white tunic *paragaudion*, even more covered with gold, with a similar portrait — of Czar Justin."<sup>29</sup> This would indicate the popularity of such imperial portraits on gold medallions in the second half of the sixth century. The imperial portrait medallion suggests Constantinople as the place of origin, and, since it has links to its chains similar to those on the fragment of the necklace found with the Strzygowski medallion, it affords additional evidence that the owner or owners of the Lamboussa treasure were in contact with the capital.

That a family in Cyprus in the second half of the sixth and early seventh centuries should have close Constantinopolitan connections is entirely reasonable. Before the time of Justinian, Cyprus was under the administration of the Count of the Orient in Antioch, but in 553 Justinian, probably for strategic reasons, placed Cyprus, along with "Scythia, Moesia, Caria and all the

<sup>28</sup> The fragment from Cyprus came to Dumbarton Oaks with the Strzygowski medallion (cf. *supra*, n. 2a and fig. 1). The necklace with the portrait of an emperor is in a private collection in New York.

<sup>29</sup> *Chronicle of John Malalas, Books VIII-XVIII*, translated by Matthew Spinka and Glanville Downey (Chicago, 1940), p. 122.

islands of the Cyclades," under the authority of "the quaestor of the army." At first Cypriotes who wanted to see the quaestor for any administrative purposes, such as settling disputes, were required to travel to whatever place in the North Danubian region happened to be his headquarters. This proved very onerous, however, and later the quaestor appointed a representative in Constantinople to act for him during his absences,<sup>30</sup> which suggests that thenceforth the Cypriotes had more urgent and probably fairly constant cause for journeying to and from the imperial city.

It is evident, then, that the Strzygowski medallion should be considered and studied, not only as an isolated object, but as part of a treasure that contained many items whose origin can be traced back to Constantinople.

## II

The medallion (figs. 1-3) has a diameter of 6.5 cm., and weighs 109 grs. It is mounted as an encolpium, as were many imperial medallions from Roman times onward.<sup>31</sup> It has a broad, flat frame like the consular medallions in the same treasure, (figs. 4, 5) with only slight differences, such as the addition of a braid-like inner border and the omission of pearl on the outer edge. The medallion is cast, not struck — as is true also of the consular medallions. On one side is the Virgin and Child enthroned between two angels, with several miniature scenes below. Directly beneath the Virgin is the Nativity, with the Christ Child in the manger and the ox and the ass. To the left Joseph is seated in contemplation. Below the Nativity scene are two shepherds pointing to a star over the manger. To the right is the Visit of the Magi: the Virgin, holding the Christ Child, is seated facing the ap-

<sup>30</sup> Sir George Hill, *op. cit.*, I, p. 258.

<sup>31</sup> J. M. C. Toynbee, *Roman Medallions, Numismatic Studies No. 5* (New York, 1944), pp. 118-119.

proaching Magi, the second of whom points to another star above them. To the far left is a horse or donkey whose presence I cannot explain. Around the edge is the inscription ΧΕ Ο ΘΕ ΗΜΩΝ/ ΒΟΗΘΙΟΝ ΗΜΙΝ ("Christ, our God, help us"). On the other side of the medallion the Baptism is represented. St. John, at the left, is baptising the nude Christ in the Jordan, while the Hand of God and the Dove of the Holy Ghost appear from the heavens. On the right are two angels with their hands covered. Below and to the right is the personification of the river Jordan, while in the center two river nymphs swim in the water. Around the edge of the medallion is the inscription + ΟΥΤΟC ΕΧΤΙΝ Ω ΥΕΙΟC ΜΟΥΟ ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟC ΕΝ Ω ΕΥΔΟΚΗCΑ ("This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"; Matt. 3:17).

Strzygowski thought that the medallion was one of the objects sold to pilgrims in the Holy Land, and brought back by them. According to him it represents the scenes in the life of Christ associated with Bethlehem and the Jordan. He connected the scene of the Magi with a mosaic known to have been on the façade of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. However, all of his iconographic comparisons were with existing monuments, such as those in the churches at Bawit, Ravenna and Parenzo, and indicated only that the representations on the medallion were scenes then depicted in churches throughout the Byzantine Empire. The late Baldwin Smith, when he made his chart for iconographical representations of the life of Christ, included most of the scenes on the Strzygowski medallion in the Oriental-Hellenistic group.<sup>32</sup> Professor Morey,<sup>33</sup> in studying the Palestinian painted panel in the *Sancta Sanctorum*, came to the con-

<sup>32</sup> E. Baldwin Smith, *op. cit.*, table II (called, in error, "Morgan Medallion").

<sup>33</sup> C. R. Morey, "The Painted Panel from the *Sancta Sanctorum*," *Festschrift zum sechzigsten Geburtstag von Paul Clemen* (Bonn, 1926), p. 157.

clusion that the presence of the personification of the river Jordan in the scene of the Baptism, always indicated an origin outside Syria or Palestine. We may also point out that a heavy gold medallion of considerable monetary value was a far cry from the cheap lead ampullae, the *eulogiai*<sup>34</sup> in terracotta or wax, or as poor an object as the painted panel in the *Sancta Sanctorum*, which were brought back from the Holy Land by pilgrims. It is not reasonable to believe that such costly and luxurious articles as cast gold medallions were purchased by humble pilgrims at holy shrines.

Professor Grabar's studies have made it clear that our medallion really celebrates the Epiphany.<sup>35</sup> It might be well, at this point, to define a medallion, and I quote, therefore, Milne's excellent definition of a medal, a medallion being simply a large version of the same type of object: "Medals, in the modern usage of the term, can be described summarily as coins designed not for currency but for commemorative purposes: like a monetary coin, a medal may be struck or cast, it is usually of some metal, and may be inscribed with a legend or stamped with a device to indicate its purport."<sup>36</sup> The imperial medallions bore the emperor's portrait on the front. In the present instance we have the Madonna holding the Christ Child, and scenes from his early life, indicating, by analogy with the imperial medallions, *who* was being celebrated. On the reverse of many imperial medallions the emperor is shown in a four-horse chariot wearing consular robes to indicate the beginning of his consulship, or in a six-horse chariot distributing money to indicate a *Largitio*;

<sup>34</sup> For examples, see Carlo Cecchelli, "Note iconografiche su alcune ampolle bobbiesi," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, IV (1927), pp. 115-139.

<sup>35</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, II (Paris, 1946), p. 176, n. 3.

<sup>36</sup> J. G. Milne, "The History of the Greek Medallion," *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson*, II (St. Louis, 1953), p. 224.

or the emperor's full-length figure is represented, with the inscription *Securitas Rei Publicae*, to indicate that the New Year or some other event is being celebrated.<sup>37</sup> Again by analogy, the event commemorated by our medallion is the Baptism of Christ on January 6th. The Epiphany was of considerable importance in the Greek Orthodox Church, and it is not surprising to find a medallion celebrating the feast.<sup>38</sup> Thus the object under consideration is not a eulogia from the holy sites between Bethlehem and the Jordan, but a medallion celebrating Christ on the day of the Epiphany, his *adventus* on January 6th.<sup>39</sup>

Let us now consider the work from the stylistic point of view. Medallions and coins will give us our best comparisons. Our medallion is cast, like the imperial consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius in the same treasure; whereas coins are generally struck. Nevertheless there is a close relationship between medallions and coins. Two artists seem to have worked on our piece, one of whom made the obverse design, and the other the reverse. The large figures of the Madonna and two accompanying angels on the obverse (fig. 2) have faces in which the eyes are rendered with a ridge above and below to indicate the lids. The two eyebrows together

<sup>37</sup> There are many examples in Toynbee, *op.cit.*, and some sixth-century examples will be noted later in this article.

<sup>38</sup> In addition to Grabar, *op.cit.*, see Anselm Strittmatter, "Christmas and Epiphany: Origins and Antecedents," *Thought (Fordham University Quarterly)*, XVII (1942), pp. 600-626; Egon Wellesz, "The Nativity Drama of the Byzantine Church," *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXXVII (1947), p. 150; Theodor E. Mommsen, "Aponius and Orosius on the Significance of the Epiphany," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 101 f. For the parallelism of the Epiphany of Christ and that of the Emperor, see E. H. Kantorowicz, "The King's Advent," *The Art Bulletin*, XXVI (1944), p. 213, n. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Strzygowski's attribution of the Etchmiadzin Gospels had also to be radically revised (see Kurt Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll, A Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* [Princeton, 1948], pp. 46-47).

form a continuous arched ridge, flattened at the center, where they are met at a right angle by another ridge for the nose. The same method of indicating these facial details is found on the imperial consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius (figs. 4, 5), which were certainly made at Constantinople. The rendering of the drapery on these consular medallions is also similar, particularly the straight, parallel lines representing the folds of the tunics. Many of the letters in the inscriptions could be compared as well. On the reverse (fig. 3) the second artist rendered the eyes like round buttons with no suggestion of lids, the eyebrows by a heavier semicircle, and the nose by a prominent ridge. These traits recall those on the gold coin of Justin II and Tiberius II, also from the Lamboussa treasure and struck at Constantinople (fig. 11). The tubular drapery of the sleeves is seen on the silver repoussé cross sent to Rome by Justin II and Sophia.<sup>40</sup> Thus there were two artists working on the medallion, both of whom seem to have been active in cutting dies for coins and in modelling medallions struck or cast at Constantinople during the time of Justin II and Tiberius II (578) and early in the reign of Maurice Tiberius (583). The stylistic analysis of the Strzygowski medallion definitely points to Constantinople as its place of origin.

The Constantinopolitan origin agrees very well with what we know about coinage in the sixth century. The use of gold was carefully controlled. Gold coins seem to have been struck only at Constantinople, Ravenna, and, possibly, Carthage<sup>41</sup> (where the beaded border

<sup>40</sup> H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *L'art byzantin*, II (Paris, 1934), no. 136a. For different opinions concerning the attribution of the cross, see A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 85-86.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Wroth, *op. cit.*, I, pp. xcix-cv; although Wroth indicates that the gold coinage of Carthage was "not set on foot, apparently, till the reign of Heraclius" (p. ci).

was not used). Through their treaty with the Persians in 562, the Byzantines had a monopoly on gold coinage,<sup>42</sup> which shows that the use of gold was carefully watched even beyond the borders of the Empire.

From the above I believe we can conclude that the Strzygowski medallion was made at Constantinople some time in the reign of Justin II, Tiberius II, or in the beginning of the reign of Maurice Tiberius.

### III

Byzantine metallic art of the sixth and seventh centuries has never received adequate consideration in books on either medallions or art history. The one exception is the great medallion of Justinian,<sup>43</sup> found in Cappadocia in 1751, and stolen and melted down in 1831, which, as Miss Toynbee has pointed out, was issued in May, 534, in Constantinople, to commemorate the triumph of Belisarius after his defeat of the Vandals in Africa.<sup>44</sup> Actually a considerable number of other medallions in gold and silver were issued in the sixth century; this is quite possibly indicative of the Renaissance trend that has been stressed in discussions of the Byzantine art of that century.<sup>45</sup>

The imperial medallions of the sixth century which have survived, or about which we have evidence, fall, like the earlier ones, into several categories, depending presumably on the occasion for

<sup>42</sup> Archibald R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500-1100* (Princeton, 1951), p. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Wroth, *op. cit.*, I, frontispiece, and p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>45</sup> Ernst Kitzinger, "Notes on Early Coptic Sculpture," *Archaeologia*, LXXXVII (1938), p. 215; G. Rodenwaldt, "Problem der Renaissance," *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, XLVI (1931), pp. 318-338. The scarcity of imperial medallions from the century before Justinian's time may, however, be due to the fact that examples have not survived, or have not been studied and published, in contrast to the Roman period where so much research in the field has been done.

which they were issued. Most of our information refers to the consular medallions. Justin I was Consul in 519 and 524, and Justinian in 521, 528, 533, and 534.<sup>46</sup> Justinian had, according to Professor Vasiliev whose account is based on that of Comes Marcellinus, the "most brilliant inauguration any Oriental consul had ever had . . . Two hundred and eighty-eight thousand solidi were spent for the organization of the games and for distribution among the populace. Justinian exhibited in the amphitheater, besides many other wild animals, twenty lions and thirty panthers. In addition, he presented as gifts to the charioteers numerous horses wearing an ornament for the forehead and breast (faleratos-phaleratos)."<sup>47</sup> There are, however, no medallions commemorating these several consulships of Justin I and Justinian, nor even any indications in the coins of these emperors that consular medallions might have been issued.

Justinian attempted to regulate the consulship so that it would not be financially impossible for a private citizen to become consul. He issued a novella for this purpose, dated "on the fifth of the *Kalends* of July, after the Consulate of the most illustrious Belisarius" (535). Some passages in this novella are of interest: "But how much should the Consul distribute among the populace during the seven processions? We shall decide this much better than was done by the Constitution of Marcian, of divine memory. This Constitution forbids every exhibition of munificence, but We amend it by allowing the incumbent of the consular office to exercise his generosity. For when he does not wish to distribute anything

<sup>46</sup> For the consuls in the period I have consulted particularly A. Degrassi, *I fasti consolari dell' Impero Romano dal 30 avanti Cristo al 613 dopo Cristo* (Rome, 1952), pp. 98-106; and E. Stein, "Post-consulat et AYTOKPATOPIA," *Mélanges Bidez, Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales*, II (Brussels, 1934), pp. 869-912.

<sup>47</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

among the people, We do not compel him to do so, just as when he desires to be liberal and honor them with gifts of silver coin, We do not prohibit it. We, however, forbid him to scatter gold coins about in either large or small sums, no matter what may be its weight or denomination; and he shall only distribute silver, as We have just remarked: for We grant the Empire the exclusive right to scatter gold, as the amount of its wealth permits it alone to despise this metal . . . . This is a rule that We establish with reference to coins thrown to the populace. Hence if a Consul desires to be generous, he can distribute money during these processions as he may deem to be advisable, and he is only forbidden to distribute gold, which is a privilege solely reserved for the Emperor.”<sup>48</sup> We shall see in later reigns how emperors used this sole right.

Justinian’s attempt to make the consulship accessible to private citizens was unsuccessful. After Basilius in 541 nothing more is heard of the consulate until the accession of Justin II in 565. At his investiture Justin II made an announcement in the Hippodrome which Gibbon has summarized as follows: “The hippodrome was already filled with innumerable multitudes; and no sooner did the emperor appear on his throne than the voices of the blue and the green factions were confounded in the same loyal acclamations. In the speeches which Justin addressed to the senate and people, he promised to correct the abuses which had disgraced the age of his predecessor, displayed the maxims of a just and beneficent government, and declared that, on the approaching calends of January, he would revive in his own person the name and liberality of a Roman consul.”<sup>49</sup>

There are no recorded consular

<sup>48</sup> S. P. Scott, *op. cit.* XVII, pp. 18, 21.

<sup>49</sup> E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, V (ed. J. B. Bury, London, 1898), p. 2 with references.

medallions or coins of Justin II, but it would seem that such pieces existed, for he revived, not only the Roman consulship, but also its “liberality.” A passage in Corippus’ *De Laudibus Iustini minoris* speaks of old silver made over with new inscriptions and figures at the time Justin assumed the consulship.<sup>50</sup> However, until we find an example of such a coin or medallion we must confine ourselves to speculation. Justin II had a second consulship in 568, but about this very little is known.

With Tiberius II we can be more confident. From Gregory of Tours we learn that he issued consular medallions weighing one Roman pound each. Dalton’s translation of the text is as follows: “At that time I had gone to the royal domain of Nogent to see the King; and there he showed us a great salver, fifty pounds in weight, which he had caused to be made of gold and gems, saying: ‘This have I had made for the glory and ennoblement of the Frankish race. And much more shall yet be done, if life remain to me.’ And he displayed to us pieces of gold, each of a pound’s weight, which the Emperor sent him, having the Imperial image on one side with the legend: TIBERII CONSTANTINI PERPETUI AUGUSTI, and on the reverse a four-horsed chariot and charioteer with the legend: GLORIA ROMANORUM. He displayed at the same time many other precious objects which the ambassadors had brought.”<sup>51</sup>

These, definitely, were consular medallions since the emperor was represented in a quadriga on the reverse.<sup>52</sup> They must have been among the most splendid issued by a Byzantine emperor (the lost triumphal medallion of Justinian weighed only half a Roman

<sup>50</sup> See Corippus, *De laudibus Iustini Minoris*, bk. IV (Bonn edition, 1836), lines 109-113.

<sup>51</sup> O. M. Dalton, *The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours*, II (Oxford, 1927), pp. 233-234.

<sup>52</sup> Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-89.



1. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Gold Medallion, and associated Pieces of Jewelry, from Cyprus. N.B., *The Hinge of the Medallion is now in the Museum of Nicosia*



2. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Gold Medallion from Cyprus. Obverse



4. Obverse

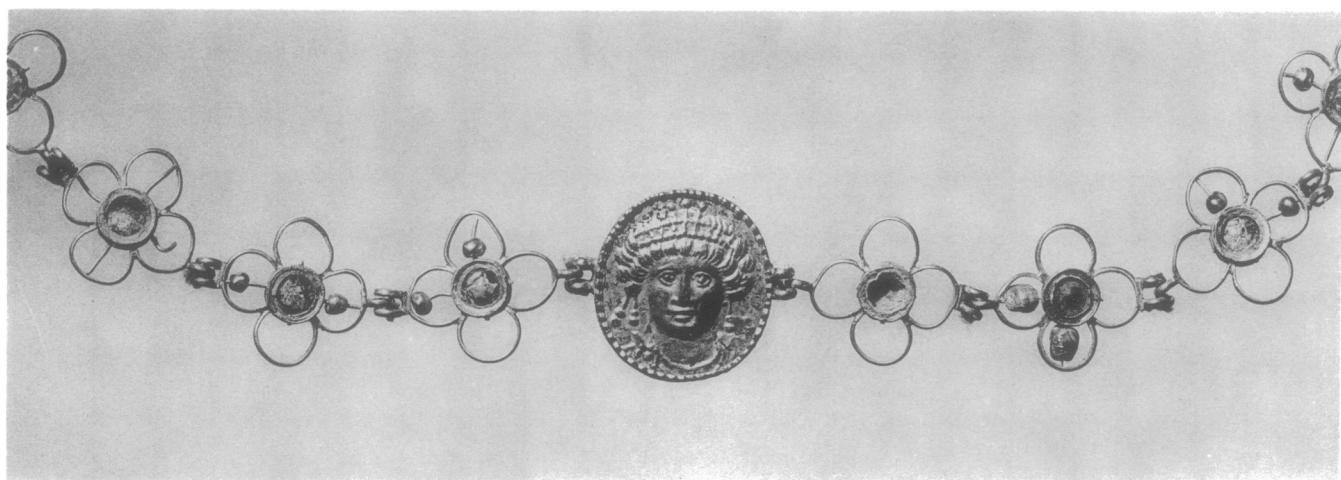


5. Reverse

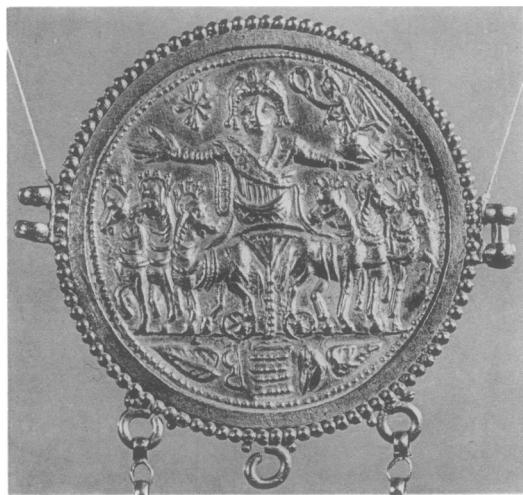
New York. Metropolitan Museum. Consular Medallions of Maurice Tiberius from Cyprus, mounted to form part of a Belt



3. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Gold Medallion from Cyprus. Reverse



6. New York. Private Collection. Gold Necklace with Portrait of an Emperor. Detail



7. Paris. De Clercq Collection. Gold Plaque



8. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Gold Bracelet. Detail



9. British Museum. Gold Plaque



11. Nicosia. Museum. Gold Coin of Justin II and Tiberius II, mounted



10. Bronze Plaque from Monceau



12. Paris. De Clercq Collection. Marriage Belt. Detail



13. Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Marriage Belt. Detail

pound). From John of Ephesus we know of Tiberius' lavish spending. While he was still Caesar, Justin and Sophia were obliged to restrain him. "When, however, he became king, and the power was his alone, and, as the story goes, [he] saw the piles of money which Justin and Sophia had gathered, he began again spending and dispersing it largely and widely: and when, at the commencement of his reign, he was distributing his Augusticum, or, as it is also called, the 'Donative of the Romans,' which was never higher in ordinary circumstances than nine darics, he sent to the army in the field against the Persians no less than eight hundred pound's weight of gold as largess . . . At all events, according to what was said both by himself and others, in the first year after he became sole monarch, he spent in this way no less than seven thousand two hundred pound's weight of gold, besides silver, and dresses of silk, and other things . . . Sophia was angry with him and scolded him, and said, 'All that we by great industry and care have gathered and stored up, you are scattering to the winds as with a fan . . .'"<sup>53</sup>

The large consular medallions of Tiberius II, of which a number were sent to Chilperic, are typical of the general lavishness of that Emperor. Although the medallions themselves seem now to be lost, traces of them probably still exist. A number of Tiberius' coins are of the consular type,<sup>54</sup> with a half-figure on the obverse wearing consular robes and carrying the eagle-mounted sceptre in the left hand and the *mappa* in the right. The coins do not, of course, show the quadriga which was usual for the medallions. However, there was found in a Frankish grave a bronze plaque which imitates the reverse of an imperial consular medallion, showing the emperor

<sup>53</sup> R. Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus* (Oxford, 1860), pp. 185, 186, 189 f.

<sup>54</sup> Wroth, *op. cit.*, I, pl. xiii, 20 etc.

riding in a quadriga (fig. 10).<sup>55</sup> I suggest that this might be a Frankish version of the reverse of one of Tiberius II's consular medallions that caused so much excitement at the Frankish court. Thus we can perhaps reconstruct the appearance of Tiberius II's imperial consular medallions. Their date was January 1, 579, when Tiberius II is known to have assumed the consulship.

With Maurice Tiberius we are entirely on safe ground. We have already noted that four gold consular medallions were found in Cyprus along with the Strzygowski medallion (figs. 4, 5). Although they are cast rather than struck, they are surely imperial consular medallions. On the obverse the Emperor is in half-figure, dressed in consular robes and carrying the eagle-topped scepter and the *mappa*, while on the reverse he is shown riding in a quadriga, as was the case with the earlier imperial consular medallions.<sup>56</sup>

Maurice Tiberius was accused later in his life of being miserly, a charge probably not deserved. In any case, at the commencement of his reign he acted like other emperors. Again I quote John of Ephesus: "Meanwhile, the God-loving King Maurice sat upon the royal throne, and showed himself, and was proclaimed as emperor, and began to manage and administer such matters as belong to the kingdom; and after the time of mourning for king Tiberius was passed, he made great preparations, and arranged the affairs of the kingdom, with much pomp and magnificence, such as suits the majesty of kings."<sup>57</sup>

As is clear from his course of action described above, Maurice Tiberius followed his predecessors in the matter of the consulship. For some reason he seems to have assumed the consulship,

<sup>55</sup> G. Behrens, "Merowingische Pressblech-Scheibenfibel," *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, 39/40 (1944-45), pp. 17-19, especially p. 18, fig. 2a.

<sup>56</sup> See *supra*, n. 52.

<sup>57</sup> R. Payne Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

not on January 1, in accordance with the custom re-established by Justin II, but on December 25, 583,<sup>58</sup> and apparently he took the office a second time, on July 6, 602, shortly before he was overthrown by Phocas. The consular medallions, however, were very probably issued to commemorate his first and most important consulship.

Like Maurice Tiberius, Phocas (602-610) did not assume the consulship on the calends of January after his coronation, but on the following December 25th.<sup>59</sup> No medallions of Phocas are extant, but a number of his coins are of the consular type.<sup>60</sup> These suggest that consular medallions were issued during his reign. A thin gold plaque, in the British Museum, of the type pressed over a coin or medallion (fig. 9)<sup>61</sup> represents an emperor in the quadriga with the *mappa* in his right hand. The emperor has a long pointed face and a pointed beard, features which can be connected only with Phocas. Thus I believe we have additional evidence that Phocas, like the sixth-century emperors immediately before him, also issued a consular medallion.

The emperors Heraclius (January 14, 611), Heraclius - the - new - Constantine (January 1, 632), and Constans II (January 1, 642) all became consuls, but, as they did not have consular processions, it is unlikely that they issued medallions. However, coins of these emperors reflect their assumption of the consulship.

Closely allied to the consular medallions is a group which Miss Toynbee includes with the "Liberalitas" type. The reverses of these medallions show the emperor, in a chariot drawn by six horses, scattering money.<sup>62</sup> The finest

example of all may be the gold medallion of the Emperor Constantius now in the Walters Art Gallery.<sup>63</sup> In the de Clercq Collection in Paris is a pressed gold plaque representing an emperor in a six-horse chariot, scattering money (fig. 7). Others have already noted that the plaque bears a resemblance to the consular medallions and that its style is related to that of the silver cross of Justin II and Sophia in the Vatican.<sup>64</sup> It is possible, or indeed probable, that we have here a plaque pressed over the obverse of a *Liberalitas* medallion of Justin II, and we are reminded of Justin's announcement at his investiture that he planned to revive the "liberality of a Roman Consul." In the Dumbarton Oaks Collection is a pair of gold bracelets, each with a pressed plaque, said to have been found in Syria. The two plaques are identical and show an emperor in a six-horse chariot, scattering money (fig. 8). This again is the *Liberalitas* type of medallion. The inscription is incomplete and only partly legible: D N △ T . . . . PIAVIC. I suggest that it is based on a model which read: D N M TIBERIUS PP AUG. On the coins of the first year of his reign, Maurice Tiberius had the name "Tiberius" placed first, out of respect for Tiberius II, his late father-in-law. In his second year, however, the name "Mauricius" began to be given first place; so it is possible that the Dumbarton Oaks bracelets reflect a transitional phase. That Maurice Tiberius, early in his reign, should have issued a *Liberalitas* medallion is well in accord with what we know of him. The shape of the emperor's diadem and his general features also agree with what we know of this ruler, and would certainly have

<sup>58</sup> Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 887.

<sup>59</sup> *Idem*, p. 887.

<sup>60</sup> Wroth, *op. cit.*, I, pls. xx, 12 and xxi: 4, 8.

<sup>61</sup> F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Jewellery, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman, in the British Museum* (London, 1911), p. 369, no. 3097.

<sup>62</sup> Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 110 for *Liberalitas*

medallions in general, and p. 111, n. 156, for the six-chariot type.

<sup>63</sup> *Idem*, pl. xxi.

<sup>64</sup> A. de Ridder, *Collection de Clercq*, VII, Part I, *Les Bijoux* (Paris, 1911), p. 260, no. 1416 and pl. vii, and A. Samson, "Médailon d'or de Maurice Tibère, monté en bijou," *Le Musée*, III (1906), pp. 60-61.

been unlikely before the second half of the sixth century.

Another type of medallion is that with the "Adventus" theme. The only extant example from the sixth century is a medallion of Justin (I or II?)<sup>65</sup> in the Cabinet des Médailles. It has not yet been resolved what "arrival" was being celebrated with this issue, but in the light of the consular medallions one may venture to suggest that most of these sixth- and early seventh-century medallions were issued to celebrate specific events. This is less certain in the case of a little-noted gold medallion of Justinian, in the de Clercq Collection, inscribed on the reverse: SECVRITAS REIPUBLICAE.<sup>66</sup> There is a series of silver medallions with the portrait bust of the emperor on the front, and the standing figure of the emperor in military costume on the back, bearing the inscription: GLORIA ROMANORVM, which, in the opinion of Babelon, refers to a triumph.<sup>67</sup> There are four medallions of this type, one of Justin I in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, and three of Justinian — one each in the Photiades Collection,<sup>68</sup> the Cabinet des Médailles,<sup>69</sup> and the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. The two examples in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection will be published by Prof. Alfred Bellinger in the next number of the *Dum-*

<sup>65</sup> H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 72e. For a general discussion of the *adventus* iconography, see Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-109 and E. H. Kantorowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-231. Possibly this *Adventus* medallion refers to an imperial statue sent to Rome. Cf. L. Duchesne, "Le palatin chrétien," *Nuovo bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, VI (1900), p. 19 and, for statues of Phocas and Leontia sent to Rome, E. Baldwin Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1956), pp. 150-151.

<sup>66</sup> A. de Ridder, *op. cit.*, p. 261, no. 1417, pl. vii.

<sup>67</sup> E. Babelon, "Justinien et Bélisaire; histoire d'un médaillon disparu," in his *Mélanges numismatiques*, Series 3 (Paris, 1900), p. 335.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Froehner, *Collection Photiades Pacha, Monnaies byzantines* (Paris, May 23-24, 1890), pl. I, no. 117.

<sup>69</sup> H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 72f.

*barton Oaks Papers*. But the most important of all known triumphal medallions of the sixth century was, of course, the lost one of Justinian referred to above.

Two silver medallions, one of Maurice Tiberius and one of Phocas, illustrate a new tendency in medallions in that they have merely Christian symbols on the reverse. The silver medallion of Maurice Tiberius is known to me only in the illustration of the Photiades catalogue.<sup>70</sup> Its obverse bears the head of the Emperor with an inscription, and its reverse the *Chrism*. The silver medallion of Phocas will be discussed by Professor Bellinger in connection with an example in the Thomas Whittemore Collection to be published jointly with the Dumbarton Oaks medallions. The Emperor's portrait in profile is shown on the obverse, and a Latin cross with two palm branches on the reverse.

A roundel impressed on a gold hair ornament, now in the Walters Art Gallery,<sup>71</sup> perhaps also reflects a medallion type. On it is represented the head of a woman, with the walled-city crown, and at each side a flying figure of a Nike carrying a wreath. The inscription "Kosmia" has never been satisfactorily explained. It would seem, because of the design and the pearl-bordered, that a medallion had existed from which the impression derives. In his discussion of the Mersina encolpium Professor A. Grabar mentions the possibility that it, too, imitates an actual medallion.<sup>72</sup> Another necklace in the same treasure has a clasp made of gold pressed over two coins,<sup>73</sup> which indicates that the artist who made the jewelry was familiar with that technique.

<sup>70</sup> Froehner, *op. cit.*, pl. I, no. 225; also Wroth, *op. cit.*, I, p. 107.

<sup>71</sup> R. Zahn, *Gallerie Bachstitz*, 's-Gravenhage, II (The Hague, 1921), pl. xix, no. 100; and Paul Friedländer, *Documents of Dying Paganism* (Los Angeles, 1945), p. 28, n. 10.

<sup>72</sup> A. Grabar, "Un médaillon en or provenant de Mersine en Cilicie," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, VI (1951), p. 34.

<sup>73</sup> *Idem*, pl. 2, no. 6.

Two pairs of gold pressed plaques, differing in style, but with the identical marriage scene repeated twice, are said to have been found in Syria. One in the de Clercq Collection (fig. 12)<sup>74</sup> was acquired at Balanea, the other, in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (fig. 13),<sup>75</sup> is said to have come from Antioch. Both are generally attributed to Syria because of their alleged provenance. The composition, however, is not exclusively Syrian. The scene occurs in the fifth-century mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>76</sup> It appears on fifth-century coins from Constantinople; one of Theodosius II shows the Emperor joining Eudoxia and Valentinian in marriage (437), while another represents Christ performing the same ceremony for Marcian and Pulcheria (after the death of Theodosius II in 450).<sup>77</sup> Two gold marriage rings in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, said to have been found in Constantinople, show the same scene, but are not imperial.<sup>78</sup> The iconography, thus, was quite familiar in Constantinople. Neither of the two marriage belts is imperial, but the bride on the Dumbarton Oaks belt has a three-piece ornament on her head, a detail which suggests that an imperial medallion may have provided the model. These two belts may actually have been made in Syria, but I believe that the compositions derive from a Constantinopolitan original (or originals) which was imperial. The style of the Dumbarton Oaks belt is, to me at least, reminiscent of the series of David plates

<sup>74</sup> A. de Ridder, *op. cit.*, p. 208, no. 1212, pl. vi.

<sup>75</sup> *Handbook of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (Washington, D. C., 1955), no. 190, illustration on p. 95.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, III (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1917), pl. 17.

<sup>77</sup> H. Dressel, "Erwerbungen des Kgl. Münzkabinets in den Jahren 1890-1897," *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, XXI (1898), pp. 247-249, pl. VII: 15, 16.

<sup>78</sup> Nos. 53.12.3 (*Handbook*, p. 77, no. 176) and 53.12.8.

in the Metropolitan and Nicosia Museums; these plates, as we have seen, could not have been made in Syria, and are in all probability Constantinopolitan in origin. This strengthens the possibility that in the sixth and seventh centuries imperial marriage medallions were made in Constantinople.

From the above we see that the art of the medallion had not ceased in the sixth and seventh centuries, but was practiced then to a far greater extent than has hitherto been supposed.<sup>79</sup> As a matter of fact some superb imperial medallions were made, such as the lost one of Justinian, that of the same Emperor in the de Clercq Collection, and the four consular medallions in the Metropolitan Museum (figs. 4, 5). The medallions of Tiberius II described by Gregory of Tours must have been among the most spectacular ever produced.

Thus the Strzygowski medallion fits very neatly into our picture of the medallistic art in the sixth century. Not only does its style recall the gold coins of the last quarter of the sixth century and the consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius, but the very existence of so splendid a piece may, in part, be explained by the interest in medallistic art characteristic of that time. By contrast to the fourth century, when emperors travelled more extensively, and had medallions struck wherever they happened to be, there is no evidence of this art being practiced in the sixth century anywhere except in Constantinople. The question naturally arises as to whether our medallion might have been produced in the imperial workshops, since stylistically it recalls the coins and medallions from those workshops, and since so many objects from the same find are Constantinopolitan, as we have seen.

<sup>79</sup> Surely these medallions, and others that may well exist, deserve to be studied by numismatists and historians. I believe that they had not entirely lost all meaning, and that they reflect events of the times as did earlier medallions.

The subjects are not imperial in the old sense, but their disposition follows along the line of the imperial medallions, with the person to be honored shown on the obverse, and the event to be honored on the reverse. A tendency to introduce a religious element may be observed even in imperial coins of the last decades of the sixth century. John of Ephesus relates an amusing incident about a change made by Tiberius II in the coinage of his predecessor, Justin II: "And further he also made a public profession of being a Christian; for Justin had introduced in the coinage of his darics a female figure, which was generally compared to Venus, and this Tiberius discontinued, and had a cross struck upon the reverse of his coins: and this act, as he himself said, was dictated to him in a vision."<sup>80</sup> The seated, draped figure of the tyche of Constantinople appears on some of the coins of Justin II, and it was presumably this figure that was confused with Venus. In bowing to criticism of this representation, and in introducing a cross on the reverse of his coins, Tiberius II followed a definite trend of his period, though, by saying that he was told in a dream to make the change, he gracefully avoided any reflection on his predecessor. We have already noted that Maurice Tiberius issued a medallion with a *Chrism* on the reverse, and Phocas one with a cross and two palm branches. These pieces are very different in concept from the imperial medallions of the fourth century, on the reverse of which Christian symbols were incidental rather than the main feature. From these issues of Maurice and Phocas it was only a short step to the idea of celebrating Christ's Epiphany with an imperial medallion of the "Adventus" type. Such a medallion would have been most appropriate for an emperor to distribute at the New Year. He might have done this in a year other than a consular one — or in a consular

<sup>80</sup> R. Payne Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 192; and Wroth, *op. cit.*, p. xix.

year during which a regular consular medallion was also struck — in order to "prove" himself a Christian, as John of Ephesus would have said. This idea can be only a suggestion, but with the growing tendency, in the last quarter of the sixth and early seventh century, of both coins and medallions to become christianized, and to serve the purposes of the Church, such a possibility certainly exists.

#### IV

The practice, noted above, of pressing thin gold plaques over a gold medallion was very common in the sixth and seventh centuries. A number of Langobard crosses are decorated with heads of Byzantine emperors made by pressing a sheet of gold over a Byzantine coin. In the Germanische Museum in Nürnberg is a Langobard gold cross<sup>81</sup> with the head of Justin II obtained by pressing the metal over one of his coins. A cross (found at Langerringen) in the Maximilian Museum in Augsburg<sup>82</sup> shows a head of the Emperor Phocas taken from one of his coins. Other crosses so adorned include one formerly in the Trivulzio Collection, with the head of Heraclius, and another from Beneventum, with an impression of a coin of Leo III.<sup>83</sup>

This extensive use of medallions and coins to reproduce imperial scenes and portraits on thin gold sheets for decorative purposes raises the question of whether the same might not have been done with religious medallions. An examination of the evidence does, in fact, indicate that there were once many more of the latter than have survived today.

<sup>81</sup> J. Werner, *Münzdatierte austrasische Grabfunde* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1935), p. 132, no. 195, pl. v (top row).

<sup>82</sup> W. A. von Jenny, *Die Kunst der Germanen im frühen Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1943), pl. 32.

<sup>83</sup> S. Fuchs, *Die langobardischen Goldblattkreuze aus der Zone südwärts der Alpen* (Berlin, 1938), p. 92, nos. 173, 174, pls. 37 and 32 (wrongly marked no. 175).

Baldwin Smith<sup>84</sup> published a drawing by Pozzo, now at Windsor, of a lost encolpium that had the Flight into Egypt on one side and the Ascension on the other. He states that this was made of two thin sheets of gold placed back to back. If this was so, it imitated a medallion, since it was made to be seen from two sides. In the von Gans Collection in Berlin is another encolpium with an imitation medallion definitely made of two sheets. On one side is the Annunciation and on the reverse the miracle at the Marriage at Cana.<sup>85</sup> Though the pierced ornament of the frame of the encolpium indicates that it was intended to be seen from only one side, the imitation medallion itself has two sides, and this suggests that the jeweler was copying an actual medallion, as he did with an imperial medallion in the upper part of the same necklace. A gold encolpium from Palestine also has such an imitation medallion in two thin sheets of gold; one side shows the Annunciation, the other the Baptism.<sup>86</sup>

Other pressed gold plaques are singletons rather than pairs placed back to back. Their derivation from religious medallions is less certain, but since we found the reverses of consular and Liberaltas medallions used in isolation, not to mention the single impressions of coins on Langobard crosses, these single pressed plaques with religious subjects should also be noted here. The Dumbarton Oaks Collection owns one with a representation of the Baptism.<sup>87</sup> In the Fribourg Museum is a gold encolpium with the Adoration of the Magi and the in-

<sup>84</sup> E. Baldwin Smith, "A Lost Encolpium and some Notes on Early Christian Iconography," *B.Z.*, XXIII (1914-19), pp. 217-225.

<sup>85</sup> Walter Dennison, *A Gold Treasure of the Late Roman Period* (New York, 1918), pls. xv, xvi, and xvii.

<sup>86</sup> J. H. Iliffe, "A Byzantine Gold Enkolpion from Palestine (about Sixth Century A.D.)," *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, XIV (1950), pp. 97-99, pls. xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv.

<sup>87</sup> *Handbook*, no. 189, illustration on p. 91.

scription in Greek "Lord, preserve [the wearer]." This was found in a Burgundian grave at Attalens.<sup>88</sup> Two gold plaques, also with the Adoration of the Magi, are in the museums of Catanzaro and Reggio in southern Italy.<sup>89</sup> A gold pressed plaque in the Naples museum has the bust of Christ supported by two adoring angels, and the inscription ATIOC.<sup>90</sup> The Berlin Museum owns three gold pressed plaques of the sixth and seventh centuries; one with the Holy Riders,<sup>91</sup> another with the Incredulity of Thomas,<sup>92</sup> and a third with Daniel in the Lions' Den.<sup>93</sup> A number of bronze pressed plaques may also reflect medallions; one with the Baptism was found in the Sanctuary of Menas in Egypt,<sup>94</sup> another, with the Adoration, at Minden an der Saur.<sup>95</sup> A bronze pressed plaque found in Hungary, with two angels adoring a cross,<sup>96</sup> may, on the other hand, have been modelled over a Byzantine cameo with this subject, such as that in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.<sup>97</sup>

It is, at any rate, clear that the art of making medallions continued to flourish in Constantinople through the sixth and into the seventh century. The Byzant-

<sup>88</sup> M. Besson, "La fibule d'Attalens," *Revue Charlemagne*, I (1911), p. 185, pl. xxx; and A. Gaspard, "L'apport byzantin dans la région alpine," *L'Hellénisme contemporain*, Series 2, X (1956), p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Diehl, "Notes sur quelques monuments byzantins de Calabre," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, X (1890), pp. 301, 302.

<sup>90</sup> C. Cecchelli, *Il trionfo della Croce* (Rome, 1954), p. 170, fig. 82.

<sup>91</sup> H. Schlunk, *Kunst der Spätantike im Mittelmeerraum* (Berlin, 1939), no. 54, pl. 11.

<sup>92</sup> *Idem.*, no. 55, pl. 11.

<sup>93</sup> *Idem.*, no. 56, pl. 11.

<sup>94</sup> C. M. Kaufmann, *Die heilige Stadt der Wüste* (Munich, 1918), fig. 83, opposite p. 119.

<sup>95</sup> H. Kühn, "Szenische Darstellungen der germanischen Völkerwanderungszeit," *Ipek*, XV/XVI (1941-42), p. 280, pl. 107, no. 2.

<sup>96</sup> J. Hampel, *Alterthümer des frühen Mittelalters in Ungarn*, III (Brunswick, 1905), pl. 170, no. 1.

<sup>97</sup> For others, see E. Babelon, *Catalogue des camées antiques et modernes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1897), no. 335, with bibliography.

tine minor arts must be carefully studied in the light of this conclusion. The Constantinopolitan examples must be separated from those made in the provinces,<sup>98</sup> and among the latter we must distinguish those that were pressed over Constantinopolitan originals. New light may thus be thrown on the history of Byzantine art in the sixth and seventh centuries.

#### POSTSCRIPT

Since this article was written, Mr. Philip Grierson has published one dealing with the girdle set with the consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius ("The Kyrenia Girdle of Byzantine Medallions and Solidi," *The Numismatic Chronicle*, XV, ser. 6, no. 45 [1955], pp. 55-70). Of the many points discussed by Mr. Grierson, one is particularly pertinent to this article, i.e., that the four consular medallions of Maurice Tiberius were struck, not cast, and were not, therefore, the

<sup>98</sup> The two gold, pressed medallions in the Museum in Constantinople, said to have been found in Adana, may be Palestinian or Syrian in origin (for illustrations, see H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 73b), since they recall strongly the ampullae from the Holy Land, particularly because of the small series of apostles' heads surrounding the whole (for comparisons see Cecchelli, *op. cit.*, *passim*).

The fragment of a bronze pressed bulla, also with scenes in parallel layers, found at Achmim may have the same origin (see Robert Forrer, *Die frühchristlichen Alterthümer aus dem Gräberfelde von Achmim-Panopolis* [Strasbourg, 1893], pl. ix, 9).

work of a goldsmith, but came from the mint. This raised the question whether the Strzygowski medallion, which should henceforth be called the Dumbarton Oaks medallion, was also struck. Unfortunately no similar pieces exist for a comparison such as Mr. Grierson was able to make with the four consular medallions. However, Mr. William J. Young, Director of the Research Department at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, has just announced the discovery of a method for distinguishing, by means of X-rays, a coin or medallion that has been struck from one that has been cast. Mr. John S. Thacher, Director of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, arranged for Mr. Young to examine the Dumbarton Oaks medallion. Mr. Young reports: "The gold medallion from Cyprus, which was analyzed by X-ray diffraction, indicated a struck structure." The significance of this analysis is as follows: (a) The medallion was doubtless struck at the imperial mint. (b) The medallion was part of an issue intended for distribution, not a singleton made by a goldsmith. (c) Further corroboration is given to the possibility that struck medallions with religious subjects may have existed in appreciable numbers, as indicated above, on the strength of the existence of pressed pseudo-medallions with such subjects. (d) These religious medallions sent out from Constantinople would have made an important contribution to the spread of iconographical ideas throughout the empire.